



**Republic of Mozambique**  
**Ministry of Culture and Tourism**  
(World Heritage Site N° 599)  
(Contrat N° 4500007986)

**REPORT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF ISLAND OF  
MOZAMBIQUE (WORLD HERITAGE SITE) 2024<sup>1</sup>**  
**DECISION: 45 COM 7B.36**



**By: MOZAMBIQUE ISLAND CONSERVATION OFFICE (GACIM) IN  
COLLABORATION WITH THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF CULTURAL  
HERITAGE**

---

<sup>1</sup> Revision by Célio Tiane, National Director of Cultural Heritage- Focal Point for the Convention

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This progress report reflects the actions that were carried out between 2022 and 2024 with regard to the management, conservation and preservation of the Cultural Heritage of Ilha de Moçambique (World Heritage Site, UNESCO 1991).

It should be noted that the main focus of this report is on the built heritage of the Island of Mozambique, with greater emphasis on the effects of Cyclone Gombe, which hit the Island of Mozambique in March 2022, with particular emphasis on the efforts of state institutions, the private sector and civil society in recovering from the damage caused by the cyclone, both in the city of Macuti and in the city of stone and lime. On the other hand, the report also describes the restoration and conservation work carried out on buildings classified as World Heritage Sites, both by state initiatives and the impact they have had on improving the state of conservation of the site's heritage, always in strict compliance with the general principles of integrity and authenticity. In another approach of great importance, the report points out the main challenges and threats that are currently being faced in the conservation of the island's Cultural Heritage within a context where the contemporary dynamics of the globalized world that directly or indirectly have some impact on the Site's Outstanding Universal Value.

Among the monuments listed in the document “Nomination of Ilha de Moçambique for inclusion in the World Heritage List 1990-1991”, it is important to mention that four (04) were seriously affected by the cyclone, namely: São Paulo Palace (now the Ilha de Moçambique Museum); São Domingos Convent (Court); Nossa Senhora de Baluarte Chapel in the São Sebastião Fortress; Ilha de Moçambique Hospital and the Municipal Market. As a result of Cyclone Gombe in 2022, Mozambique, as a State Party to the Convention, activated the Emergency Fund and International Assistance mechanisms, which contributed greatly to the recovery of Ilha de Moçambique.

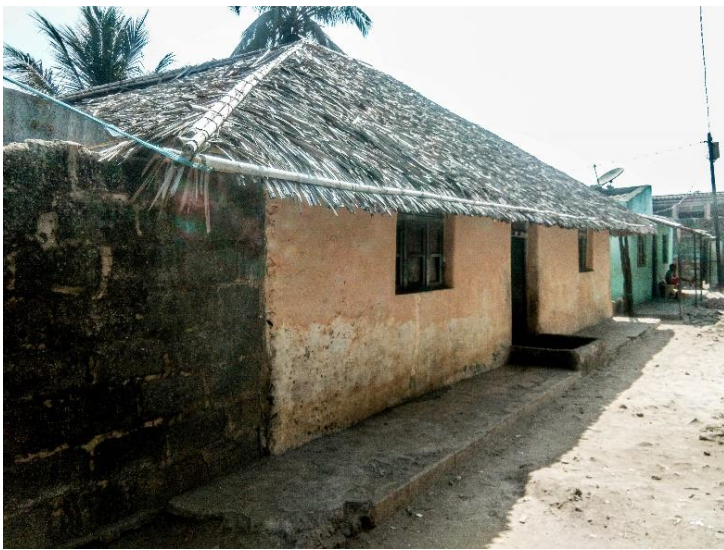
**Decision: 45 COM 7B.36**

**Island of Mozambique (Mozambique) (C 599)**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.4** adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Commends the State Party for its response to the impacts of Cyclone Gombe in March 2022, in particular by organizing a prompt assessment of the damages caused by the cyclone and by mobilizing support through both Emergency International Assistance and the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) to undertake rehabilitation of traditional Swahili houses with on-site trainings of local communities and on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) for cultural heritage for local stakeholders, and to develop emergency preparedness and risk mitigation protocols for the property, but urges all stakeholders concerned to expedite implementation of these projects to avoid further delay;

**PROGRESS:** Following the activation of International Assistance and approval by the World Heritage Committee by decision dated June 30, 2022, funding of USD 75,000 was allocated to Mozambique Island. Following the submission of the intervention project to restore 15 macuti houses, the first tranche of USD 25,000 was disbursed, which enabled the restoration of five (05) macuti houses, as shown in the photos below:







However, after requesting the second tranche, including the extension of the contract dated 23/11/2023, WHC has still not responded, despite frequent contacts with the Focal Point for Portuguese-speaking Countries. Work is currently underway to settle the matter with the WHC and we believe that the disbursement of the remaining tranches of the contract can soon be resumed, which will allow the recovery work on the remaining houses selected for intervention to continue. With regard to the Emergency Fund, it should be noted that the “Gombe” project has been implemented on the island of Mozambique by the UNESCO Office in Maputo, in coordination with GACIM, with a focus on training members of the local community in climate change, resilience and risk and disaster mitigation actions.

4. Further commends the State Party to conduct rehabilitation of the hospital complex and the island's courthouse, also affected by the cyclone, and requests the State Party to report to the World Heritage Centre in due course on the progress made;

**PROGRESS:** Following the passage of Cyclone Gombe in 2022, a general survey was carried out of the state of conservation of the heritage of Ilha de Moçambique, covering the Hospital Complex and the Courthouse, where minor work was carried out to improve the roof, with sheets being placed in open spaces. The Hospital building has not benefited from conservation work, and contacts are currently being made with the World Heritage Fund following the approval of Ilha de Moçambique's inscription on the World Monument Watch 2025. It is hoped that funding will be obtained from international donors and philanthropists for the restoration of the Hospital, which will initially consist of work to restore the damaged roof structure, eliminate pathologies and damp and structurally stabilize all the buildings in the complex. However, depending on the preparatory contacts underway to obtain funding, an action coordinated by the WHF, there are encouraging signs about the recovery of the Hospital Complex.



Hospital da Ilha (GACIM 2024)



Hospital da Ilha (GACIM 2024)

As part of the efforts to restore the monuments destroyed by the cyclone in 2022, the Largo do Museu bandstand was restored and maintenance work was carried out on the Ilha de Moçambique Museum building, financed by the Portuguese Cooperation Emergency Support Funds, as shown in the images below:



Correto do Largo do Museu ( GACIM 2024)



Museu da Ilha de Moçambique ( GACIM 2024)

5. Takes note of the relocation of services of some long-term vacant public buildings to the mainland for safety reasons, as well as of the efforts of some state institutions to establish public-private partnerships to ensure recovery of degraded buildings, and encourages the State Party to seek technical assistance from the Advisory bodies in view of the possible adaptive reuse of these buildings, should major interventions on them be foreseen;

**PROGRESS:** State institutions with dilapidated facilities on Ilha de Moçambique continue to make efforts to obtain funding from both the state budget and cooperation partners for the restoration of their respective buildings, and notable progress can be seen in the restoration and maintenance of the building of the Instituto Médio Politécnico da Ilha de Moçambique (IMPIM), which is benefiting from restoration work financed by Portuguese cooperation. Portuguese Cooperation has also financed the ongoing restoration work on the extension to GACIM's offices for the operation of the Department of Architectural, Historical and Archaeological Protection, which will make it possible to allocate more specialized technicians to GACIM and create favorable working conditions.





Extensão dos escritórios do GACIM (-GACIM 2024)



IMPIM (GACIM 2024)

6. Thanks, the State Party for having submitted the updating of the Conservation and Management Plan 2022-2027 that should be finalized once the recommendations provided by ICOMOS are incorporated, and takes note with satisfaction of the efforts to increase the staff and capacities of the Island of Mozambique Conservation Office (GACIM) to ensure effective implementation of the Plan;

**PROGRESS:** The Management and Conservation Plan for Ilha de Moçambique has already been finalized and submitted to UNESCO, and its application is already taking place on Ilha de Moçambique through the activities of GACIM and the Municipality of Ilha de Moçambique. It is important to note that the new management plan refers to the need to create a specific risk and disaster management plan for the World Heritage Site,

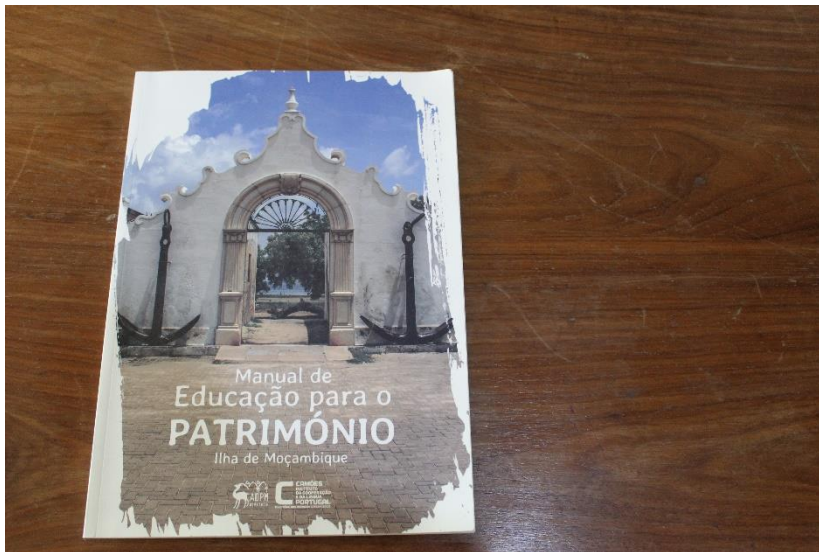
which is justified by the advancing effects of climate change. On the GACIM side, work is still underway to disseminate the plan to the various local stakeholders so that, on the one hand, its content is appropriated by everyone and, on the other, that actions to seek funding for the sustainable conservation of the island are a priority for all local stakeholders. However, work is underway to finalize the incorporation of the recommendations provided by ICOMOS.

### **Progress on the Management Plan**

**Objective 3:** To promote sustainable development on Ilha de Moçambique in order to ensure socio-economic benefits for the island and the country, contributing to improving the living conditions of the island's inhabitants, making the island an increasingly inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable city. Actions towards this goal are being carried out by the Municipality of Ilha de Moçambique through the promotion of community activities to clean up monuments and work to raise awareness among users of beaches and public places about observing cleanliness and sustainable solid waste management. The urban appearance of Ilha de Moçambique has seen many improvements, attracting tourism and business to the communities, which has a positive impact on heritage conservation. The implementation in 2022 of the project “Improving the living conditions and conservation of the city of Macuti, Ilha de Moçambique through an approach to historic urban landscapes”, funded by UNESCO Netherlands in collaboration with the UNESCO Paris World Heritage Center, included training actions for members of the local community on issues related to cultural entrepreneurship and community business management through the use of cultural heritage resources.

**Objective 4:** To interpret, publicize and disseminate, at national and international level, the significance of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Island of Mozambique, with the aim of improving the inhabitants' knowledge of the importance, benefits and constraints of living in a World Heritage City. Since 2022, as part of Portuguese cooperation, GACIM has had a partnership with the Associação de Defesa do Património de Mértola (ADPM), a development NGO that works in the areas of heritage education, environmental awareness and cultural entrepreneurship. Through ADPM, Heritage Clubs were created and promoted on the island of Mozambique, bringing together teenagers and young people with activities in the local communities. The ADPM partner also produced

the “Heritage Education Manual - Ilha de Moçambique”, which was distributed free of charge to schools and public and private institutions on Ilha de Moçambique.



As part of the “Islands and enchantments” project (2021-2014) funded by the European Union and co-financed and managed by Camões, I.P., GACIM won international funding with partners from Portugal, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe, and one of the visible products of the project is the creation of the Casa dos Contos in the city of Macuti. The Casa dos Contos is evidence of GACIM's material contribution to the conservation of the city of Macuti. In terms of specific activities carried out at the Casa dos Contos, the following can be mentioned: photographic and visual arts exhibitions on the World Heritage of Mozambique Island; exhibitions of children's drawings; community meetings and gatherings; creative writing workshops involving teachers and pupils from the island's elementary school; exhibitions and sales of local handicraft products; various workshops and seminars; lectures on heritage and environmental education; Heritage Club activities. As a community space, Casa dos Contos is open to hosting activities organized by local communities.

GACIM's application for the Venice Architecture Biennale 2025 has been approved and Casa dos Contos will feature in the exhibition “Deep Surface: Polyfunctional architecture to enhance the experience of UNESCO designated sites”.



House of Tales (GACIM 2024)

7. Encourages the State Party to pursue its efforts to strengthen GACIM's authority and technical capacities, notably by approving the proposed amendment of GACIM's statutes, and by reinforcing the cooperation between GACIM and the Municipality, on issues and activities related to the management and conservation of the property, and commends the State Party for the engaged efforts to recruit new staff;

**PROGRESS:** The proposal to change GACIM's statutes is still awaiting approval by the Council of Ministers, which partly requires a budget increase for the proposed new structure. However, while awaiting approval of GACIM's new structure, which has no negative impact on its normal functioning, activities continue to take place satisfactorily and coordination with the public entities on Ilha de Moçambique (the Municipality and the Government), as well as with the Mossuril District Government in the buffer zone, is making notable progress. With the ongoing refurbishment of the extension to GACIM's offices, it is hoped that GACIM's staff will grow and that more qualified technicians will be allocated to the institution in the coming years. GACIM currently has a total of seventeen (17) employees.

8. Welcomes the development of various tools to support the management and conservation of the property, and their availability to the local communities, building owners and stakeholders, notably the Conservation guidelines and the "Specific Rules for the Conservation of the Built Heritage of the Macuti Town", and requests that the Urban



Structure Plan of the property be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, to fully completing the approval and ratification process;

**PROGRESS:** The “Specific Rules for the Conservation of the Built Heritage of Macuti City” were discussed at the last session of the Municipal Assembly in 2023 and, due to their importance and the guarantee of their effective implementation, it was recommended that the instrument be included in the annex to the Municipal Code of Postures, which could be updated by the current Executive of the Municipality of Ilha de Moçambique, which took office in February 2024. The Urban Structure Plan has already been approved by the Government of Mozambique and published in the Official Gazette. However, the Urban Structure Plan takes a macro view, i.e. it covers the entire district of Ilha de Moçambique and, in the case of the area mentioned above, there should be a Detailed Plan which could pay attention to specific aspects with a direct impact on the conservation of Ilha de Moçambique's cultural heritage.

9. Notes that a general survey of all the buildings in the Stone and Lime town includes an assessment of each building's state of conservation and establishes the current uses of these buildings which are residential, commercial, religious and tourist in nature, requests the State Party to provide more detailed information on this survey, and to extent the inventory to Macuti town, covering all the property;

**PROGRESS:** Through work carried out by the Municipality of Ilha de Moçambique, financed by Portuguese Cooperation, the Cadastre of all the neighborhoods in the city of Macuti was created and the same work is currently being done on the city of stone and lime. The Cadastre of the city of Macuti has been an instrument of great importance in the conservation of cultural heritage and, above all, with regard to the urban aspects of the insertion of buildings, as well as the control of new constructions and/or reconstructions, thus facilitating the work of monitoring and inspection.

10. Further thanks the State Party for the particular attention given to the involvement of the local communities, including through heritage education and awareness-raising actions, and encourages the State Party to ensure increased community involvement and consultation in particular in view of the development of an urban mobility plan aimed to decongest the island and reduce the demographic pressure;

**PROGRESS:** The heritage education activities at the World Heritage Site have been carried out by GACIM in schools, markets and in the various neighborhoods of the city, while the work carried out by the Neighborhood Development Committees (CDBs) created on the island of Mozambique by an NGO partner, the Aga Khan Foundation, and financed by Portuguese Cooperation, has been decisive. At GACIM level, the residents of the city have been made aware of the right established in the Municipal Code of Postures to request prior information on the viability of ideas for projects, and in this way technical assistance has been provided to those interested. The situation of congestion on the island and the resulting demographic pressure has been treated with great concern by the municipality, and the solution necessarily involves urbanization and the allocation of land on the mainland.

11. Further notes that the State Party undertook the new buffer zone delimitation, and requests that it be submitted as a proposal for a Minor Boundary Modification to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, following the procedure set in Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines;

**PROGRESS:** The first proposal to change the Buffer Zone dates back to 2011. The Buffer Zone excluded parts of the mangrove forest in the estuaries of the Mossuril area and does not fully include ecologically important areas for the marine ecosystem in the Bay, such as the coral reefs between Cabaceira Pequena and Sete Paus Island. On the other hand, the adoption of milestones such as 1000 meters around the village of Mossuril or from the coast at Cabaceira Grande to include the built heritage that is dispersed and has a low occurrence and many areas included in the Buffer Zone, presents other challenges for the development of human settlements in what are considered expansion zones. The 2022-2027 Management Plan presents a new proposal for 2017 with a delimitation of the Protection Zone that follows, for the most part, the limits and parameters adopted in 2011, but with some changes and additions that take as a reference the result of the documentation of the built and landscape heritage carried out in the mainland area, as well as the integrity of the natural heritage and ecosystems that should deserve equal attention in terms of management and conservation of the heritage of Ilha de Moçambique. The Management Plan is currently being disseminated to public and private entities and civil society on Ilha de Moçambique and in the Mossuril District, with the aim of ensuring that it is adopted. The new proposal to delimit the Buffer Zone

presupposes its recognition by all these entities, including the creation of material and financial conditions for sustainable and coordinated management by all those involved. The State Party is aware of the need for review by the Consultative Bodies, following the procedure established in Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines, and the procedures will be strictly observed.

12. Also notes the proposal to construct a “Tourist complex in Goa Island”, is still under examination, and reminds the State Party to ensure, should the project be approved, that no works be carried out, until information has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, pursuant to Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

**PROGRESS:** There has been no significant progress on the proposal to use the Goa Island Complex for tourism, and the project previously submitted by the applicant never reached the stage where it was analyzed by the National Council for Cultural Heritage for the necessary guidelines. In order to protect Goa Island, the Mozambican government wants to create a partial environmental protection zone between the two islands (Goa and Sena), which could bring gains for the protection of marine biodiversity. On the other hand, the Goa Tourist Complex project falls within the perimeter of the new proposal for demining the Mozambique Island Buffer Zone, so its analysis must take into account the objectives defined for the Buffer Zone.

13. Further commends the State Party on its actions in addressing threats from climate change induced storm surges, also noting the potential spatial and visual impacts of these structures, further requests the State Party to develop a long-term strategy for sea defense infrastructure, and to assess this through Visual and Heritage Impact Assessments, and submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;

**PROGRESS:** There is the prospect of drawing up an architectural and structural project to reinforce the barriers and coastal protection structure on Ilha de Moçambique. In 2017, a major step was taken in this direction with the rehabilitation and reinforcement of the barrier protecting the coastline of Ilha de Moçambique, so there are areas of the city's coastline already duly mapped by the Municipality in coordination with GACIM that show wear and tear of the barrier due to the force exerted by the sea waves. In terms of

the São Sebastião Fortress, the reinforcement of the monument's waist is guaranteed and the first step will be taken in the restoration of the Nossa Senhora de Baluarte Chapel, which includes the reinforcement of the foundation. The restoration work on the Chapel of Our Lady of Baluarte is expected to begin in February 2025, and funding from Portuguese Cooperation has already been secured through an agreement signed with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Administrative work is currently underway to obtain exemption from customs duties on the import of building materials from Portugal and South Africa. On the other hand, the felling of mecrusse wood is underway, exceptionally authorized by the sector that oversees the Land and Environment area, to be used in the work, as documented in the image below. The State Party is continuing to make contacts to obtain funding for the project and the Site Manager's participation in the Ferrara Restaurant Fair and Restaurant Week, which took place in Italy from May 13 to 17, 2024, was a good opportunity to establish contacts with Italian companies and specialists.



Madeira mecrusse abatida na Reserva de Crusse (GACIM 2024)





Capela Nossa Senhora do Baluarte ( GACIM 2024)



Baseamento da Capela Nossa Senhora do Baluarte- Fortaleza de São Sebastião ( GACIM 2024)

14. Welcomes further the State Party's plan to address impacts of climate change through the development of a strategy for sea defence infrastructure in view of incorporating it into the Disaster Risk Management Plan, reinforcing measures provided in the 2017 Local Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change is favourable, and reminds it to use the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context in view of ensuring the conduction regarding the Visual and Heritage Impact Assessments, and requests the State

Party to submit the Disaster Risk Management Plan with the incorporated strategy to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory bodies.

**PROGRESS:** The Management and Conservation Plan for Ilha de Moçambique 2022-2027 very briefly addresses the main risks associated with the site. The 2017 Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan needs to be updated in order to respond to the dynamics of climate change, although in many respects it is still current. At the Mozambique Island District level, a Technical Disaster Management and Response Team has been set up, whose actions are based on the Contingency Plans drawn up each year.

15. Also encourages the State Party to continue to mobilize funds (e.g., through International Assistance) to address the community living conditions and the sanitation in Macuti town, following the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;

**PROGRESS:** The State Party, through GACIM, submitted an application for UNESCO International Assistance funding No. 3428 with the project “Community participation in assessing the state of heritage conservation and resilience mechanisms in response to risks and disasters caused by cyclonic events”. The project was approved and is currently in the initial stages of implementation on the island of Mozambique. The project consists of training members of the local community in climate change and mitigation measures, as well as providing the multisectoral team with tools for surveying and measuring the effects of climate change on the integrity and authenticity of Mozambique Island's World Heritage Site. The survey of the state of conservation of the island's heritage after the passage of Cyclone Gombe in 2022 will be carried out by members of the local community under the guidance of specialist consultants hired by the project. The project's international consultancy is headed by architect Mariana Correia and through her participation it has been possible to involve a multidisciplinary team made up of specialists from Portugal's Universidade Portucalense, which opens up a new era of technical and scientific partnership between GACIM and Universidade Portucalense. The final product of the project will be the production and free public distribution of a BOOKLET that addresses the general state of conservation of the heritage, the risks associated with Site and mitigation measures and perspectives for responses to future cyclonic events and risks resulting from climate change.

Public access to state of conservation report [Note: this report will be uploaded for public access to the World Heritage Center's website Conservation Information System (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>) .

This report will be published on the Ilha de Mocambique website for public access via [www.ilhademocambique.ac.mz](http://www.ilhademocambique.ac.mz)

The Site Manager

---

Cláudio Zunguene

/ Intern Reseacher/